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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION
Radio Service

T I M E L Y F A R M T O P I C S

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRES
RETURNED BY STATIONS, COUNTY AGENTS
HANDLING, USING THE SERVICE

Survey Conducted Jointly by:
Radio Service
Extension Information Division
During late spring 1945

1000
1000

FOREWORD

The Timely Farm Topics transcription service consists of a bi-weekly platter prepared by the USDA for use in county agent, station farm and other local radio programs. USDA specialists supply the material and voice the scripts. The length varies mostly from five to eight minutes, not including the mimeographed introduction and follow-up.

Each side of the record contains a separate broadcast and is complete except for the introduction and follow-up. The distribution and use is operated through and promoted by State Extension Services. The purpose of the TFT service is to distribute through radio, national and regional agricultural information along scientific and campaign lines without conflicting with State information. The scripts are fashioned in attractive style that's easily fitted into established programs. TFT supplements, not duplicates other USDA and State Extension radio services.

A survey was conducted jointly by the USDA Radio Service and Extension Service to check on various phases of the use of TFT, mechanical quality, length, need for homemakers' information, format, and style of presentation, etc.; and to determine improvements along these lines needed to make it a more usable and effective service.

Two quite similar questionnaires were prepared. One for stations and one for county agents. The "station" questionnaire was sent directly to each station in 34 States using the TFT transcriptions in any of various ways. The "agent" questionnaire was sent directly to each county agricultural agent in 24 States concerned with local use of the transcriptions either on his own program or other local broadcast.

The following report presents both statistical and narrative results of the questionnaires returned. The answers are as of late spring (1945).

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Section A

QUESTIONNAIRES SENT OUT AND RETURNED

SENT TO	NUMBER	RETURNED BY	NUMBER	PERCENT OF THOSE SENT
STATIONS in 34 States	209	STATIONS in 27 States	94	45
AGENTS in 24 States	184	AGENTS in 18 States	88	47.5
TOTAL	393	TOTAL	182	46

* * *

Section B

STATISTICAL SUMMARY STATION QUESTIONNAIRES RETURNED

<u>No. Sent Out</u>	<u>No. Returned</u>	<u>% Returned</u>
209 in 34 States	94 from 27 States	45%

Location and Number of Stations Reporting

State	Number	State	Number	State	Number
Delaware	1	Minnesota	1	Ohio	6
Idaho	3	Mississippi	5	Oregon	6
Indiana	3	Nebraska	6	Pennsylvania	1
Georgia	1	Nevada	1	Rhode Island	1
Iowa	5	New Hampshire	1	South Dakota	4
Kansas	3	New Jersey	2	Vermont	4
Louisiana	2	New York	14	Washington	4
Massachusetts	1	North Carolina	3	West Virginia	7
Michigan	3	North Dakota	4	Wyoming	2

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

In the following the left figures show the actual number of stations; and the right figures show the percentage of the total number of stations answering each question.

I. USE OF TRANSCRIPTIONS

1. The transcriptions are not primarily designed to be used as complete programs. But have you been using them as (check one):

(a) Complete, separate "shows"	17	18%
(b) As segments of a program	72	77%
Both	5	5%

2. If you check (b), do you use them as a part of a regularly scheduled farm program?

(a) Yes	77	82%
(b) No	7	7%
No reply	10	11%

3. Are the transcriptions used on programs that are: (check which):

(a) Sponsored	7	7%
(b) Sustaining	68	73%
(c) Participating	17	18%
(d) Sponsored and sustaining	1	1%
No reply	1	1%

4. Do you combine the transcriptions with localized "live" information by (check one or more):

(a) Station Farm Program Director	53	50%
(b) County Agent	15	14%
(c) Other local authority or farmer	16	15%
(d) No live information	8	8%
No reply	14	13%

5. If you combine with live follow-up, is this done:

(a) Occasionally	38	40%
(b) Regularly	29	31%
(c) No live follow-up	10	11%
No reply	17	18%

6. Time of day you use the transcriptions:

(a) Early morning (5:30-8:00 a.m.)	46	49%
(b) Noon	35	37%
(c) Other time (specify)	11	12%
(d) Early morning and noon	1	1%
No reply	1	1%

II. MECHANICAL QUALITY

1. Uniformly good	80	79%
2. Some are inferior because of (check which):		
Surface noise	10	10%
Shallow Cut	1	1%
Weak Side walls causing needle to jump	2	2%
Other	8	8%

III. FORMAT AND STYLE OF PRESENTATION

1. Each transcription has opened "cold". We have included scripts with each transcription and have written suggested live opening. Please give a yes or no answer to these questions:

(a) Is this satisfactory

Yes	64	68%
No	3	3%
No reply	27	29%

(b) Would you rather have transcribed opening

Yes	28	30%
No	28	30%
No reply	38	40%

(c) Does it help for the State Extension Editorial Office to rewrite and localize the opening that is written in Washington?

Yes	32	34%
No	17	18%
No reply	41	44%
Already localized by Editorial Office	4	4%

2. Format and style of presentation have varied. We'd like to know which kind you like best.

	: 1st	: 2nd	: 3rd	: 4th	: No
	:Choice	:Choice	:Choice	:Choice	:Undesirable:Reply
	: 49%	: 24%	: 8%	: 1%	: 18%
Two-way discussion	: 45	: 22	: 7	: 1	: 0 : 17
Two-way discussion with dramatic segments and music	: 31%	: 15%	: 19%	: 3%	: 16% : 16%
Documentary (narrator plus dramatic segments)	: 28	: 14	: 17	: 3	: 15 : 15
Straight talk by administrator or specialist	: 6%	: 17%	: 26%	: 11%	: 15% : 23%
	: 5	: 16	: 24	: 10	: 14 : 23
	: 17%	: 16%	: 10%	: 29%	: 12% : 16%
	: 16	: 15	: 9	: 26	: 11 : 15

2 say that any type is all right -- they have no preference.

IV. LENGTH OF TRANSCRIPTION

1. Transcriptions have been of varying length. Should we stick to one standard length of program?

Yes	52	55%
No	30	32%
No reply	12	13%

Please rate the length you have found most useful

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	
	Choice	Choice	Choice	Choice	Choice	Choice	Undesirable: Reply
	55%	7%	10%	4%	3%	3%	4% : 14%
5 minutes	:51	: 6	: 9	: 4	: 3	: 3	: 4 :13
6 minutes	: 8%	:26	: 6	: 6	: 5	: -	: 15 :27
7 minutes	: 15%	: 10%	: 18%	: 7%	: 1%	: -	: 21 :24
8 minutes	: 11%	: 6%	: 7%	: 15%	: 3%	: 1%	: 30 :23
10 minutes	: 13%	: 12%	: 7%	: 3%	: 11%	: -	: 28 :22
Over 10 but less than 15	: 7%	: 2%	: 7%	: 3%	: 1%	: 5%	: 46% : 29%
	: 6	: 2	: 6	: 3	: 1	: 5	: 43 :27

1. can use any length between 5 and 10 minutes

2. Note that all the above suggested lengths are less than a full 15-minute program. Would you be interested in receiving regularly a 13-minute program (complete transcribed show) in dramatic style covering various phases of scientific agricultural results and progress?

Yes	45	48%
No	45	48%
No reply	4	4%

V. HOMEMAKERS' INFORMATION

So far, all transcriptions have been on farm subjects. Assuming programs would be in line with your preferences as expressed in Sections II, III, and IV, would you like to receive and use similar transcriptions covering information for homemakers?

Yes	65	69%
No	21	22%
No reply	8	9%

* * *

II. MECHANICAL QUALITY

1. Uniformly good	80	79%
2. Some are inferior because of (check which):		
Surface noise	10	10%
Shallow Cut	1	1%
Weak Side walls causing needle to jump	2	2%
Other	8	8%

III. FORMAT AND STYLE OF PRESENTATION

1. Each transcription has opened "cold". We have included scripts with each transcription and have written suggested live opening. Please give a yes or no answer to these questions:

(a) Is this satisfactory

Yes	64	68%
No	3	3%
No reply	27	29%

(b) Would you rather have transcribed opening

Yes	28	30%
No	28	30%
No reply	38	40%

(c) Does it help for the State Extension Editorial Office to rewrite and localize the opening that is written in Washington?

Yes	32	34%
No	17	18%
No reply	41	44%
Already localized by Editorial Office	4	4%

2. Format and style of presentation have varied. We'd like to know which kind you like best.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	No
	Choice	Choice	Choice	Choice	Undesirable:Reply
	49%	24%	8%	1%	18%
Two-way discussion	45	22	7	1	17
Two-way discussion with dramatic segments and music	31%	15%	19%	3%	16%: 16%
Documentary (narrator plus dramatic segments)	28	14	17	3	15
Straight talk by administrator or specialist	6%	17%	26%	11%	15%: 23%
	5	16	24	10	14
	17%	16%	10%	29%	12%: 16%
	16	15	9	26	11
					15

2 say that any type is all right -- they have no preference.

IV. LENGTH OF TRANSCRIPTION

1. Transcriptions have been of varying length. Should we stick to one standard length of program?

Yes	52	55%
No	30	32%
No reply	12	13%

Please rate the length you have found most useful

	: 1st	: 2nd	: 3rd	: 4th	: 5th	: 6th	:	
	:Choice:	:Choice:	:Choice:	:Choice:	:Choice:	:Choice:	:Undesirable:	:Reply
	: 55%	: 7%	: 10%	: 4%	: 3%	: 3%	: 4%	: 14%
5 minutes	:51	: 6	: 9	: 4	: 3	: 3	: 4	:13
6 minutes	: 8	:26	: 6	: 6	: 5	: -	: 15	:27
7 minutes	: 15%	: 10%	: 13%	: 7%	: 1%	:	: 23%	: 26%
8 minutes	:14	: 9	:17	: 7	: 1	: -	: 21	:24
10 minutes	: 11%	: 6%	: 7%	: 15%	: 3%	: 1%	: 32%	: 25%
Over 10 but less than 15	:10	: 5	: 7	:14	: 3	: 1	: 30	:23
	: 13%	: 12%	: 7%	: 3%	: 11%	:	: 30%	: 24%
	:12	:11	: 7	: 3	:10	: -	: 28	:22
	: 7%	: 2%	: 7%	: 3%	: 1%	: 5%	: 46%	: 29%
	: 6	: 2	: 6	: 3	: 1	: 5	: 43	:27

1 can use any length between 5 and 10 minutes

2. Note that all the above suggested lengths are less than a full 15-minute program. Would you be interested in receiving regularly a 13-minute program (complete transcribed show) in dramatic style covering various phases of scientific agricultural results and progress?

Yes	45	48%
No	45	48%
No reply	4	4%

V. HOMEMAKERS' INFORMATION

So far, all transcriptions have been on farm subjects. Assuming programs would be in line with your preferences as expressed in Sections II, III, and IV, would you like to receive and use similar transcriptions covering information for homemakers?

Yes	65	69%
No	21	22%
No reply	8	9%

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Section C

STATISTICAL SUMMARY COUNTY AGENT QUESTIONNAIRES RETURNED

<u>No. Sent Out</u>	<u>No Returned</u>	<u>% Returned</u>
184 in 24 States	88 from 18 States	47 $\frac{1}{2}$ %

Location and Number of Agents Reporting

State	Number		State	Number
Alabama	4	:	Minnesota	9
California	6	:	New Mexico	5
Georgia	5	:	Montana	6
Idaho	1	:	Ohio	2
Illinois	3	:	Oregon	7
Indiana	7	:	South Carolina	4
Maine	5	:	Texas	7
Maryland	2	:	Washington	3
Massachusetts	2	:	Wisconsin	10
		:		

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

In the following: the left figures show the actual number of county agents; and the right figures show the percentage of the total number of agents answering each question.

I. USE OF TRANSCRIPTIONS:

The transcriptions are sent to you primarily for use as a segment in a program which you present or help to arrange on a local station.

1. Do you use them as (check one):

(a) Complete, separate programs	17	20%
(b) As segments in a program	65	70%
Both	6	10%

2. Is the program:

(a) Operated by the Extension Service	52	59%
(b) By the Radio Station	33	38%
Both	2	2%
No reply	1	1%

3. If it is station program, is it:

(a) Sponsored in full by one or more firms	7	8%
(b) Sustaining	35	40%
(c) Participating	10	12%
No reply	36	40%

4. Do you combine the transcriptions with localized information prepared by:

(a) Yourself	66	51%
(b) Local representatives of USDA agencies	17	13%
(c) Farm Leaders	18	13%
(d) Others	15	11%
(e) No localization	11	9%
No reply	4	3%

5. If localized information is combined with the transcriptions, is it broadcast:

(a) By station representative	24	31%
(b) By you	54	69%

6. If you use this live follow-up, do you do it:

(a) Regularly	26	34%
(b) Occasionally	32	43%
No reply	17	23%

7. Time of day you use the transcriptions:

(a) Early morning (5:30-8:00 a.m)	35	38%
(b) Noon	36	39%
(c) Other time	19	20%
No reply	2	3%

II. MECHANICAL QUALITY

1. Uniformly good	74	84%
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2. Some are inferior because of:

Surface noise	6	7%
No reply	8	9%

III. FORMAT AND STYLE OF PRESENTATION

Each transcription has opened "cold." We have included scripts with each transcription and have written suggested live opening. Please give a yes or no answer to these questions:

(a) Is this satisfactory:

Yes	63	72%
No	6	7%
No reply	19	21%

(b) Would you rather have transcribed opening:

Yes	20	20%
No	24	30%
No reply	44	50%

(c) Does it help for the State Extension Editorial Office to rewrite and localize the opening that is written in Washington:

Yes	32	37%
No	7	8%
No reply	49	55%

Format and style of presentation have varied. We'd like to know which kind you like best.

	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice	Un- desirable	No Reply
	45%	21%	7%	5%	2%	20%
Two-way discussion	40	19	6	4	2	17
Two-way discussion with dramatic segments and music	29%	18%	17%	8%	6%	22%
	26	16	15	7	5	19
Documentary (narrator plus dramatic segments)	4%	8%	29%	25%	9%	25%
	3	7	26	22	8	22
Straight talk by administrator or specialist	22%	22%	15%	19%	2%	24%
	16	19	13	17	2	21

IV. LENGTH OF TRANSCRIPTION

Transcriptions have been of varying length. Should we stick to one standard length of program?

Yes	45	51%
No	38	43%
No reply	5	6%

Please rate the length you have found most useful

	: 1st : 2nd : 3rd : 4th : 5th : 6th : Un- : No	
	: Choice: Choice: Choice: Choice: Choice: Choice: desirable: Reply	
	: 44%: 5%: 7%: 7%: 7%: 4%: 6%: 20%	
5 minutes	: 40 : 4 : 6 : 6 : 6 : 3 : 5 : 18	
	: 12%: 39%: 6%: 10%: 6%: : 2%: 25%	
6 minutes	: 11 : 35 : 5 : 9 : 5 : - : 2 : 21	
	: 16%: 8%: 36%: 8%: 1%: 1%: 6%: 24%	
7 minutes	: 14 : 7 : 32 : 7 : 1 : 1 : 5 : 21	
	: 6%: 10%: 12%: 25%: 6%: 2%: 12%: 27%	
8 minutes	: 5 : 9 : 11 : 22 : 5 : 1 : 10 : 25	
	: 14%: 10%: 2%: 8%: 25%: 1%: 16%: 24%	
10 minutes	: 12 : 9 : 2 : 7 : 22 : 1 : 14 : 21	
Over 10 but	: 12%: 6%: 2%: 4%: 2%: 21%: 25%: 28%	
less than 15	: 11 : 5 : 2 : 3 : 2 : 18 : 22 : 25	

Note that all the above suggested lengths are less than a full 15-minute program. Would you be interested in receiving regularly a 13½-minute program (complete transcribed show) in documentary style covering various phases of scientific agricultural results and progress?

Yes	42	48%
No	40	45%
No reply	6	7%

V. HOMEMAKERS' INFORMATION

So far, all transcriptions have been on farm subjects. Assuming programs would be in line with your preferences as expressed in Sections II, III, and IV, would you like to receive and use similar transcriptions covering information for homemakers?

Yes	56	64%
No	22	25%
No reply	10	11%

SECTION D

CORRELATED NARRATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

Of Agents Reporting

A large majority of both agents and stations report using TFT as segments of programs.

Almost 3/5ths use TFT as part of Extension programs; and almost 2/5ths as part of station programs

40% use them on sustaining programs; 40% gave no reply.

51% combine with localized information prepared by themselves. A few combine with information prepared by various others. Also a few offer no localization.

Of those using localized follow-up: 69% broadcast it themselves and 31% have station announcer do it; and a large majority use it occasionally or regularly.

38% use the TFT in early morning.
39% use the TFT at noon.
20% at other hours.

Of Stations Reporting

Large majority use TFT as part of regularly scheduled farm programs.

A large majority use them on sustaining, with some on participating programs.

50% combine with localized live information by station farm director; 29% combine with information by agent or other local authority or farmer. Also, a smaller number offer no localization.

71% combine with live follow-up regularly or occasionally.

49% use the TFT in early morning.
37% use the TFT at noon.
A small % at other hours.

Of Agents Reporting

Of Stations Reporting

Mechanical quality is reported good by both groups. Surface noise is reported by some.

A very large majority of both groups indicate the "cold" opening with opportunity to give local "live" opening announcement to be satisfactory. Only a small percentage indicate this system to be unsatisfactory.

However, the "yes and no" opinion is more equally divided in each group on whether they prefer a transcribed introduction. Even so, the "no reply" group is extremely high (44% of the stations and 50% of the agents). Considering the actual number of answers and "no replies," it would seem that the recorded opening is not desired.

In the next question, about a third of each group indicate that it helps to have the State Extension Editorial office rewire and localize the opening. However, the "no reply" group is extremely high (55% of agents and 44% of stations). This is probably due to a lack of experience with localizing by State office.

Considering style and format of presentation, both agents and stations showed the following "first choice ranking":

- Two-way discussion
- Two-way discussion with dramatic
segments and music
- Straight talk
- Documentary (narrator plus dramatic segments)

The two-way discussion was given the highest rating by a large margin. It's interesting to note that a straight talk ranked no higher than third place.

Although a majority of both agents and stations think we should stick to one length for all TFT, a goodly percentage think we should not. Without a doubt, five minutes is the length found most useful, seven minutes being second choice. However, opinion was not requested for programs less than 5 minutes in length.

The "yes and no" opinion of both agents and stations is equally divided on whether they would like to receive regularly a 13-minute complete transcribed agricultural show in dramatic style.

In the one question devoted to homemakers' information, a goodly majority say they would like to receive transcriptions covering information for homemakers. But about 25% of each group do not wish it.

SECTION E

REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS FROM STATIONS AND AGENTS

"Question and answer -- two-way -- conversational scripts are the kind we want. Most of our programs have to be one-way from necessity."

"Should be localized. Many transcriptions carry information not locally adaptable."

"Present system of varying length and style and format depending on subject seems wise to me. We can use all forms of presentation. Keep under 10 minutes."

"Try to hide fact that performers are reading script."

"There has been a tendency to overdramatize at the expense of directness."

"Some attempts at humor have been weak and too time consuming."

"It's got to be local. Direct it to the region(s) where it applies and send it only to that region(s)."

"Fit the style to the story -- not the story to the style."

"Where possible, have DuMars and Moore bring in a specialist or researcher."

"Extremely difficult for a stranger to get by with a straight talk."

"The dialogue method seems to bring out the points more clearly. It's more interesting to the general public."

"Sometimes the two-way discussions contain a touch of corn that spoils them for my use. I like straight forward two-way informal discussion -- ad lib if possible. Drama is okay for soap operas, but not for farm information. Straight humor is okay. No puns or corn, please."

"Thank you for sending good material."

"Bringing information as a personal message in crisp style at the earliest possible time is the primary object of radio."

"Limit to about five minutes."

"Believe straight talk or roundtable discussion is more effective."

"We can use only the shorter programs, hence the more elaborately staged programs are not useful."

"Narration and dramatic segments have so far been forced."

"Keep 'em sincere, simple, straight forward, brief."

"Leave out music unless essential to information or plot of story because our farm programs are put on at hours that could be sold to commercial users."

"The station people and county agents are busy. We prefer complete programs with only the introduction and closing to be given by the local announcer. I'd do 13 minute transcriptions."

"I like the two-way discussion, but with less interruption of the speaker giving the information."

"Use same subject on both sides of the record."

"Any ways of presenting material but with music."

"I use the scripts first to develop programs of my own, then a few weeks later use the transcriptions as a follow-Up."

"Mostly I like the five minute program but welcome an occasional 13 minute record."

"Cut long transcriptions on two separate discs or one big one. Don't make us turn the disc in the middle of a program."

"I prefer scripts done by specialists rather than by people from Public Service Office."

"We have difficulty programming these transcriptions because of the irregular timing. We've used fewer of them because of that."

"We like the platters that contain specific information on some topic that we don't have available. Some of the records have been a little too general."

"All of the topics should have a direct affect on agriculture."

"More on 4-H Clubs and Victory Gardens, Poultry, Farm Safety, etc."

"Recommendations do not always agree with local ideas. When giving this kind of information, you must be more general."

"I think the folks in Washington have done a great job on these TFT. But too many have come in late."

"Please, can we have them come in at regular intervals."

"Most of them are too general."

"I'm all for straight talks of not more than four minutes if the men can handle copy adequately, but most of them cannot. Some day we're going to wake up to the realization that it's better for a good mike man to handle specialists' copy than for the guy who knows the subject to murder it."

"I think we should select some of the farm leaders for broadcasts."

"Our need is for fresh material that we don't already have. The Department must have plenty of that."

"We're getting more transcriptions than we can effectively use."

"My own situation is such that I can use either farm or home information."

"I always reboil the opening."

"I want opening to be recorded."

"I do not feel that anyone will use the records successfully unless he has enough interest to rewrite his own openings and closings. This is the least we can do for the fine service."

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SECTION E

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Note: The following conclusions and recommendations by Kenneth Gopen are based (a) partly on the questionnaires, (b) partly on field conversations with agents and station people using the transcriptions, and (c) slightly on observations both in the field and in Washington.

CONCLUSIONS

The TFT transcription service is an extremely important project of the Department.

It offers an effective means of direct participation from Washington in local farm broadcasts.

It gives the local farm director or county agent an excellent and important opportunity to tie-in local follow-ups and applications of the speakers' information.

It offers the opportunity to regionalize discussions by USDA officials. For example -- the talk by Ed Dodd to wheat growers on the urgent need for immediate preparation for more farm and community storage facilities -- and the talks by Gus Giesler on the urgent need for more sugar beets. These were sent only to large wheat producing areas in the first case and only to sugar beet areas in the second.

It's likely that the mechanics of distributing the platters through State Extension can be tightened up and improved . . . to increase the number of stations releasing the platters . . . and to work out with stations more advantageous hours for their release. In some areas, the county agents do not see the value of these platters. Others go a long way in fitting them into local conditions, etc.

It's likely that a more careful selection of topics for both national and regional use will increase the local interest in the platter service. Also, every worthy appearing topic should be screened so that nothing of possible interest is missed.

The mechanics of handling and distributing at the Washington end must not be allowed to overshadow the most important jobs of selecting good topics, preparing them in appealing style with at least some application, and getting them out for local release while the subject is either "hot" or seasonal.

We probably should continue to have the records open "cold" with the introductions given "live" locally. If the State Extension Service or the county agent does a fair job of dressing up an introduction in line with local interest in the topic, listeners will be more interested in staying tuned in.

Frequently the field users of TFT cry "the transcriptions need more localization". Actually, the TFT are no more general than parts of some of their own local programs. Some users completely miss the point of the TFT service.

Probably more should be done to promote the use of local information as a follow-up to the transcriptions when broadcast. However, considering the many different methods of handling TFT in the various States, it is surprising to note that such a goodly percentage of the records are given localization of one kind or another. It is doubtful whether much more localization will result unless it is done or promoted by the State Extension Editor. So many agents "don't have time". Perhaps more personal contact between Extension editors and agents and program directors would in many ways serve to improve and increase the use of the service.

It's obvious that the two-voice conversation or lively interview or discussion works best for including in most local programs where TFT are used. This is because (a) good conversation is hard to beat in holding listener interest, and (b) so many local programs are done by one voice. Therefore, our transcriptions in two-voice style add variety and change of pace to the local programs. One-man talk style seems to fit in only when scripts are no more than four minutes in length. . . . five at the very most.

However, this need not prevent USDA from adding some dramatic style occasionally. But if dramatic style is used, there may be difficulty in fitting it into the usual local program along with other items. Therefore, there may be some value in using such dramatic styles as flashbacks, montage, etc., in the longer (complete program) transcriptions. . . . those taking 13 minutes.

It seems that the question of style has been settled more on the basis of expediency than on the basis of the topic, its logical length and development, and the wishes and needs of the people using the transcriptions. This survey offers the first general judgment of the people who actually use the TFT on style and length.

That opinion is considerably divided on whether all TFT should be of one standard length, indicates little value in our struggling to pad out one script, or cut another, to do it. However, there appears to be some value in trying to keep the records to an even minute — say, to an even five or seven minutes, as these seem to be the popular lengths.

Although the questionnaire gave no space to show preference for a shorter than five minute record, there is a definite opinion among some TFT users and the AAACE Advisory Committee that campaign type material and one-man talks should be held to no more than four minutes. There is a less extensive but still definite opinion that research and other subject matter platters might well be expanded to seven or even 13 minutes. The Advisory Committee thinks the Scientific series should be 13 minutes and planned so that it can be used as "time copy" for either sustaining or commercial use.

Why try to make talks come out on an even minute? This is simply to help the local broadcasters figure their timing when fitting a TFT into a quarter or half hour program. However, as "even minute timing" is difficult for us, it seems best to have a record be a few seconds (10 or 15) short of an even minute, rather than 19 or 37 seconds over an even minute.

Agents and station people suggest that style, format and length should depend on what's best for telling the particular story. Also they comment that some of the humor is struggled for. "No corn please."

Establishing a homemakers' information record service similar to the TFT seems favored. But there is not enough information on how and when it will be used and who will use it, to start an effective service. More facts are needed on the kind of information agents and stations want. However, the available facts indicate that occasional platters on research information for homemakers might well be included from time to time.

The heavy "no reply" to several questions probably indicates lack of experience, uncertainty, no opinion, haste, and perhaps some weak phase of the survey.

Unquestionably, the State Extension editor is a key to successful operation of the TFT transcription service.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Sent out more regionalized platters.
2. Develop more fully the scientific research series.
3. Survey the Extension editors for frank suggestions on topics and methods of handling, and check on their efforts to localize at the State level or to get agents or stations to localize.
4. Get more topics for screening.
5. Prepare scripts farther ahead so that platters will be received a little ahead of their seasonal need. (This is specially for the benefit of the West.)
6. Promote more localized follow-up or local tie-up; and more contact between editors and stations and agents.
7. Use mostly the two-way conversational style on platters up to seven or eight minutes in length. When using dramatic styles, make platters a full program of 13 minutes.
8. Hold campaign topics and one-man talks to three or four minutes, but not more than five minutes. There are times, of course, when this can't easily be done.
9. Trying to standardize all topics to one length does not appear worthwhile.
10. Lay out a plan for including homemakers' information in the TFT series as a trial balloon for a possible T Home T series.
11. Continue the "cold" opening.
12. By all means, continue the Timely Farm Topics transcription service.

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